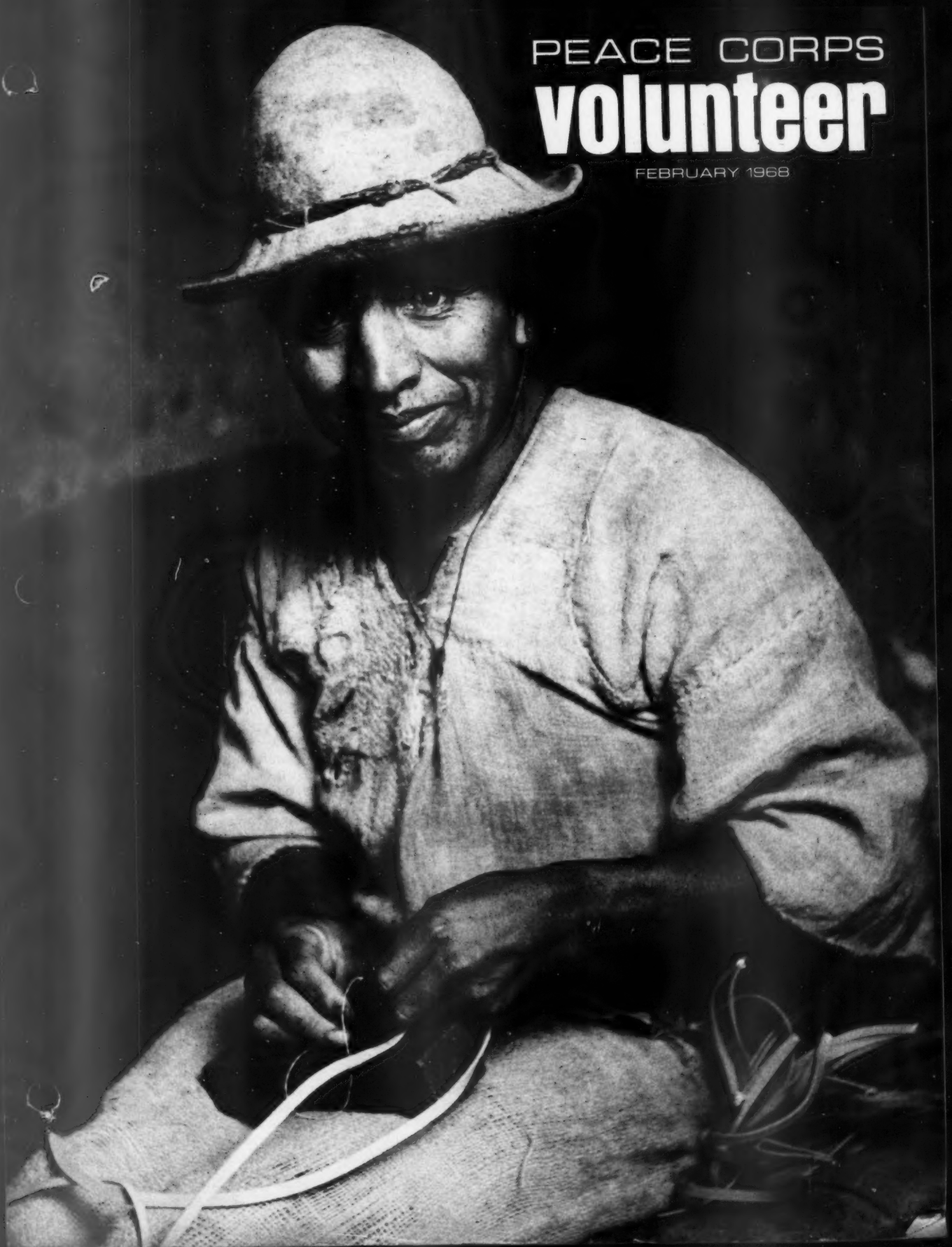

PEACE CORPS volunteer

FEBRUARY 1968

Another approach to rural transformation

The search for reverence

By LAWRENCE J. O'BRIEN

Hard-headed analysis of the Peace Corps efforts at rural "community development" in Africa over the past four years must result in a disappointing picture of scattered monuments to the drive and initiative of a few Volunteers, marred by a more general failure to achieve anything of more than transitory value to the African villager, or, indeed, to the Volunteer himself.

Even the rare successes have most frequently been achieved in disruption of village life without much attention being given to the possible ramifications of the disruptive occasions we have produced.

The principal factor underlying this record of Peace Corps failure is, in my judgment, the irreverence with which the task has been approached. Knowing little or nothing of the social organization of African villages, or of the cultural context in which values of order, work, progress, individualism and so on *must* be set if we are to have any vision of their meaning, American Volunteers have in general been content to import their own value system into this vastly different cultural context and make it do. This has been the result not of a lack of good intentions but of a failure to perceive any viable alternatives to our own basically false assumptions about "community development" in Africa.

The Peace Corps has not been alone in this regard. As W. David Robinson wrote in *Africa Today:*

"Implicit in and pervading almost all the literature is the assumption that community development would be resisted by the people and that special efforts would be needed to convince them to do what they normally would not do."

It is hard to see how any assumption could be more neo-colonial, pernicious or self-defeating. Further, Robinson says:

"It was assumed that the general good would provide a sufficient motivation to cause individuals to alter their own patterns of behavior and sacrifice their personal gain or leisure to the good of the community. In fact, except under very special circumstances, this does not happen in any society unless the personal and the general good are perceived to be compatible."

Individuals ignored

Here, I believe, lies the heart of our difficulty in achieving very much in the African village—in qualitative or in quantitative terms. The ideas of community that we bring to Africa with us have generally been, in context, unreal. We have been calling upon individuals to make very real sacrifices of their time, energy and peace of mind in the name of an anonymous and usually fictitious "community" without doing much to clarify what is in it for the individuals themselves in the way of personal advantage and, indeed, without taking much notice of individuals. According to Robinson:

"Community development attempted to appeal to individuals only as members of the community, not as individuals, and this has contributed to its failure to motivate change in village life. It is ironic that community development sought to use the schools as instruments of cooperative endeavor, while the students and their parents perceived the schools as means to greater individual achievement and mobility. Thus education spread like wildfire (despite the curriculum); community development did not. In many cases youth centers organized as part of community development are transformed into protoschools by the participants."

Even more ironic is the stubborn fact that we have, in Africa, generally fallen into the colonial habit of "placing cultural change before development." That is, we who have developed our land and our institutions on an unshakable belief in individual initiative and innovation have tended to assume that failures of community development have been due to the relative backwardness of the cultural setting rather than to our own failure to motivate individuals in terms of their own felt needs and their own culture.

The question here is: Is significant cultural amelioration the product of the efforts of individuals to improve their lot in ways that they perceive as valuable, or must the culture itself

somehow be changed in order that individual patterns of behavior might finally be altered? Colonial tradition evidently assumed the latter, attempting to transplant Western culture in the new environment or, in desperation, attempting to evacuate and reform individuals in European ways. The fault underlying the general failure of these attempts was found to be with the African community. Robinson notes that "often the burden of failure is placed squarely on the shoulders of the communities themselves which, it is said, are apathetic, resistive of innovation and alternately either too far disintegrated or not yet ready for development."

We in the Peace Corps have frequently not been very far from making the same mistake in our attempts at community development in Africa. And this is where irreverence has largely come in. We have, for example, imported our basically Calvinist notions of work and productivity into our efforts without much regard for the fact that these concepts must be redefined in a new and essentially different cultural context. Ideas of "idleness," "useless leisure" and "palm-wine drinking" cannot be usefully understood in terms of human indolence as defined in our own society. These ideas are simply not intelligible in relevant ways outside the new cultural setting considered in its entirety.

The village as a social unit and each family as a productive unit must be approached in full view of the fact that African villagers tend not to assume that "much of their time was spent in unproductive idleness." There are underlying cultural and environmental factors to be apprehended—what precisely does the idea of "work" connote in the society; or, what are the effects of widespread malarial infection on the energy levels of the people?

Labels not enough

As representatives of the most powerful technological society in the world, we must be prepared to approach the African villager in the first place with questions rather than with answers. We must, in order to teach or to motivate villagers, first learn for ourselves how African village people perceive those values that we share in name, if not entirely in concept; those values uniquely our own which they would like to appropriate; and those values uniquely theirs which might, in the process of the change we introduce, be destroyed.

Today, the Peace Corps in Africa has a brand new label for its grass-roots efforts—*rural transformation*. If only the name is changed, if the assumptions, and, consequently, the approaches remain unchanged, we will in future months be speaking and writing of the failure of rural transformation.

As a descriptive, *rural transformation* does come closer to what the African villager perceives as his own goal than did the now discredited term "community development." Yet new labels offer little insurance that false assumptions will be replaced, that increased reverence for the other culture will be achieved, or that meaningful progress will take place.

Some working assumptions evolved during four years of experience with non-Moslem villagers in two relatively sparsely populated Francophone African countries might prove useful to others:

The African villager generally perceives Western man as a superior being and Western (usually "European") technological society as superior to his own in human value, all things considered.

Individualism in the Western sense is a generally accepted, dynamic and popular value in contemporary African society. The importance of given and family names, the thrill of the aged villager who learns to write his name for the first time and the role of portrait photography in modern Africa all attest to the birth and growth of this new value.

Education is generally perceived as the shortest and surest path to progress, and progress depends upon individual achievement measured in terms taken from Western educational institutions, however irrelevant.

Most rural Africans over the age of 25 view education as the way to progress for their children but not for themselves.

Most rural Africans over the age of

25 who conceive of progress for themselves do so in purely economic terms —increased wealth and the material benefits it can lead to.

Most rural Africans over the age of 25, male or female, are definitely inclined to help themselves, to "progress" in the usual Western sense of economic incentives, improved schools for the children, better housing, adequate medical care, more and better food and, in general, a more comfortable life. These are all "felt needs" in contemporary rural African society —increased income being primordial.

Materials, too

When rural Africans refuse to make efforts toward economic improvement it is most often because of disbelief in their own ability to achieve what migratory Westerners have assured them is possible. If these doubts can be effectively overcome, one by one, there is almost never a lack of motivation, innovation, willingness or ability to sacrifice and to suffer in order to progress in non-traditional and cash-producing ways.

To assist in reducing or removing the real and pertinent doubts of the African villager about his ability to improve his economic lot or to transform his environment and his experience, the Western technician must be equipped to provide some material help along with his advice and assistance.

The general and significant conclusion to be drawn from the foregoing set of assumptions is that, in Africa, the rapid transformation of rural life can only follow—not precede—genuine, albeit small-scale, economic development of some kind. In other words: . . . community development (is) more successful as a response to economic development than (as) a stimulus of such development.

Expressed as a formula, *rural transformation follows economic development*. If the Peace Corps is serious about becoming involved in rural transformation in Africa, it will have to face the implications of that formula and reorganize itself accordingly.

Budgetary reformation would be a necessary first step for the Peace Corps in attempting this kind of reorganization. While continuing the input of Volunteers at an average annual cost of about $7,000, the Peace Corps should consider asking Congress to double the program budget, allowing up to $7,000 per year in material support for every Volunteer engaged in the transformation of developing societies. This change would most certainly confront the Peace Corps with new challenges and new dangers.

However, irreverence, or not enough sensitivity—call it what you will—is the only real barrier to overwhelming and unprecedented success for such a reorganized Peace Corps effort in rural Africa. Given men and women with a fundamental and thoroughgoing sense of reverence for life, and a full range of sensitivity of other people, other cultures, other systems of belief and behavior, the Peace Corps can become a respected and successful funnel of the "stuff" that must inevitably form the basis of any widespread and meaningful transformation of the lives of contemporary African villagers. The gift can be a fruitful thing. The giver is not doomed to eventual ingratitude and ignominy. As it always has been, it is the giving that counts and, for the Volunteer, the responsibility and the achievement that can be based upon that giving.

The prerequisites

Peace Corps Volunteers who understand rural African assumptions about the superiority of the "Europeans" and who use this insight to advantage; who see the force of individualism in modern Africa and cooperate with it; who meet villagers as individuals and learn given and family names at the outset; Volunteers who recognize the role and value of education in the contemporary African mind and perceive the sacrifices the villager is willing to make in its name; who know unquestionably that rural Africans respond to economic incentives as most men do, and who use that knowledge to pursue the common good in terms of compatibility with individual advantage; and, last but first, Volunteers who have the reverence—these men and women, serving in large numbers in Africa, would change the destiny of this continent as it moves into the twenty-first century. That destiny is today, by any objective analysis, one of impending human disaster on an enormous scale. We ought to help in its transformation—while there is still time.

Lawrence J. O'Brien, who directed the Peace Corps program in Gabon, presented the above article as a paper at the Africa Regional Directors Conference in the Ivory Coast last year. The writer was formerly an associate director in Cameroon. Before joining the Peace Corps, he taught philosophy at the College of New Rochelle.

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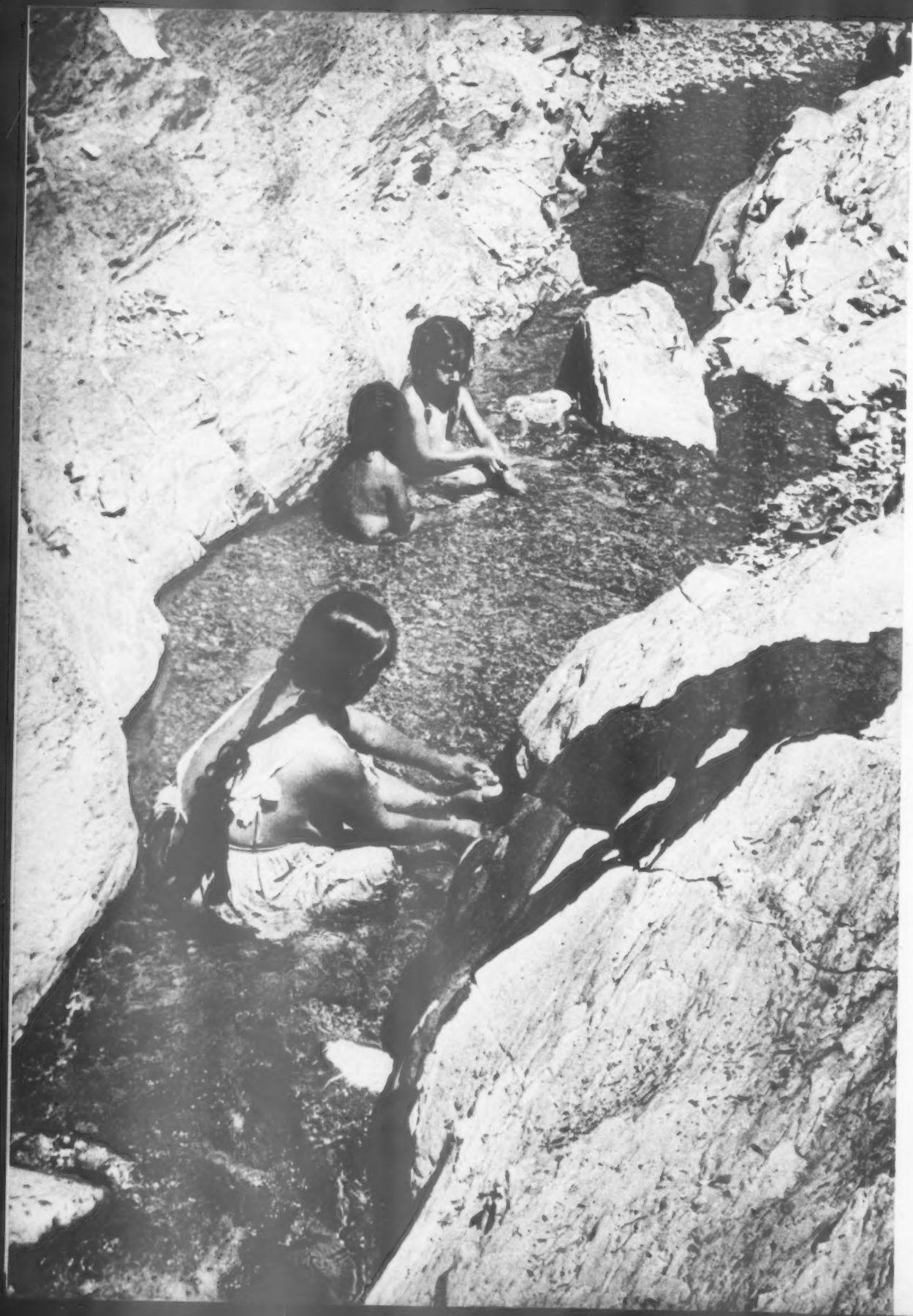
ON THE COVER: An introduction to "A tableau of Latin America," a photographic study consisting of the works of five Peace Corps photographers. It begins on page 5. The cover, by Esther Glaser Parada, shows a *campesino* in the Sucre, Bolivia, jail, preparing strips of felt for weaving mats, which is one of several crafts carried on by prisoners at the jail. More of Mrs. Parada's photographs are contained in the tableau.

A tableau of Latin America

We introduce here a 14-page photographic study of people and places in five Latin American nations, by five Peace Corps Volunteers. This presentation of Peace Corps photography extends our worldwide "Portfolio" of October, 1966. We would like to encourage similar essays from other nations and other continents as well. Interested Volunteers and staff members should send black and white prints or negatives to THE VOLUNTEER, Peace Corps, Washington, D. C. 20525.

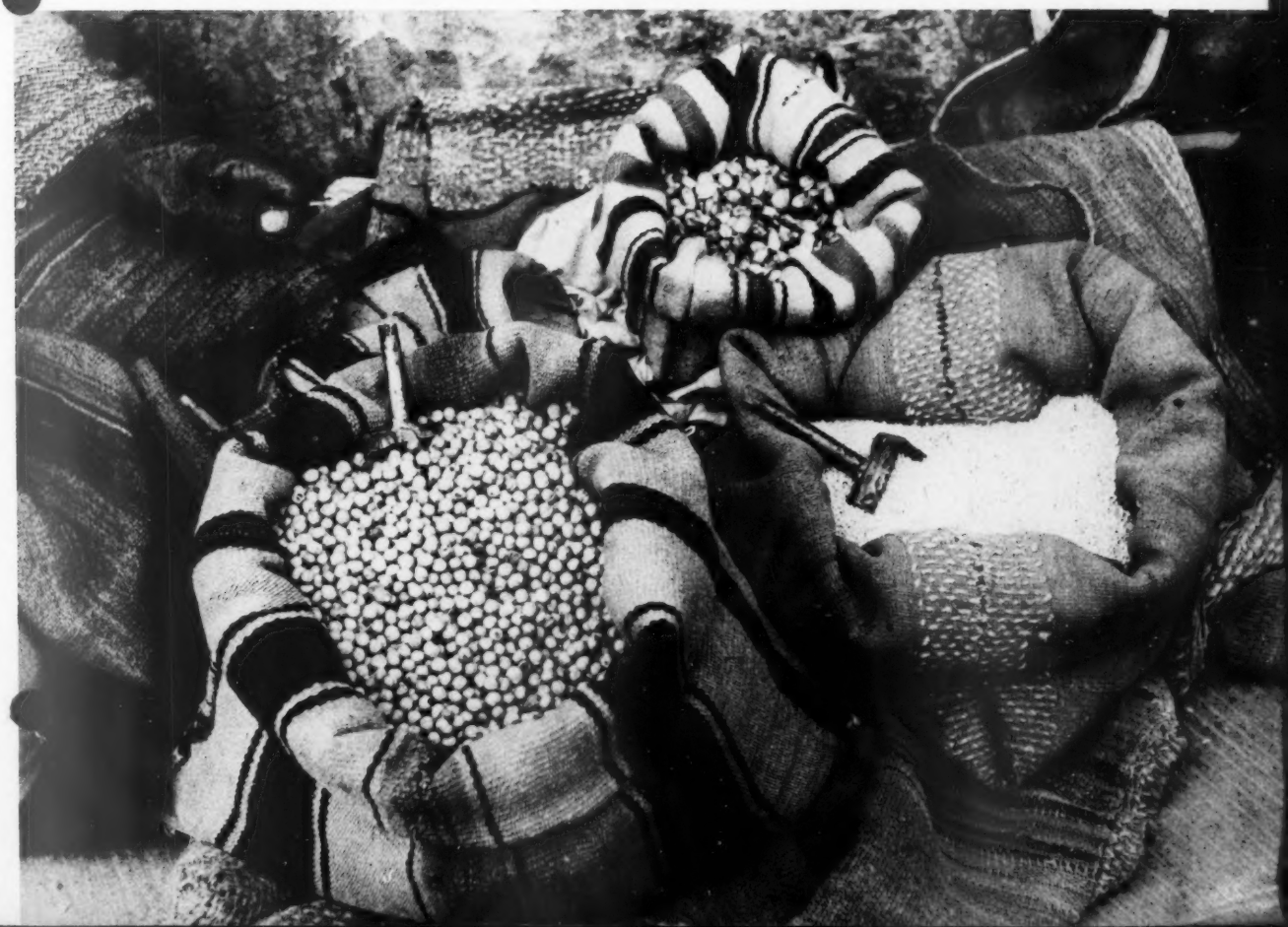
— The Editors

A campesino at Tarabuco, Bolivia.
Esther Glaser Parada



Bathing in an Andean river
near Sucre, Bolivia.
Esther Glaser Parada

Above, a Bolivian ceramic vessel.
Below, produce in handwoven bags at the market, Sucre, Bolivia.
Esther Glaser Parada



A grave marker in Formosa, not far from Brasília.
Tom Grill

A *campesina* in the town of Chulumani, Bolivia.
Esther Glaser Parada

, Bolivia.

festival in Quito, Ecuador. The crowd enjoys attempts of small boys to climb greased poles. *John Bruning*

Desert landscape in northern Chile.
Kay Muldoon

A *campesino* near Elias Piña, Dominican Republic.
John Terence Turner

Mourners at a wake in Quito, Ecuador.
John Bruning

A cemetery in Quito.
John Bruning

Quito.

Looking toward the historic Brazilian mining town of Ouro Prete, now more ed for its baroque churches and green countryside than for its gold.
Grill

Above, a *campesino* plowing near Betanzos, Bolivia.
Esther Glaser Parada

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS:

— Esther Glaser Parada, who was a Volunteer in Bolivia, is working as a photographer at Chicago State College and doing graduate work in photography at the Illinois Institute of Technology. Her work has been exhibited in La Paz, Nashville, Washington, D. C. and Chicago.

— Tom Grill is a Brazil correspondent for THE VOLUNTEER who teaches photo journalism at the University of Brasília. He has had several exhibitions during the past year.

— John Bruning was an Ecuador correspondent for THE VOLUNTEER during the last half of the three years he served as a Volunteer. Before joining the Peace Corps, he was a reporter-photographer for a Cincinnati newspaper.

— Kay Muldoon, a regular contributor to THE VOLUNTEER, won several national awards in photography while she was a Volunteer in Chile. She recently completed two years of service there.

— John Terence Turner is a VOLUNTEER correspondent who is engaged in a tuberculosis program at Elias Piña, Dominican Republic.

Campesina with festive hat, Tarabuco market, Bolivia.
Esther Glaser Parada

A moment of prayer outside Saint Francis Church at San Francisco Plaza in Quito.
John Bruning

A former staff member suggests

Reducing the staff role

By JOHN COYNE

The Peace Corps, which talks a great deal about working itself out of a job, might very well begin the process by eliminating its overseas staff.

Having participated in the agency on both sides of the overseas desk as a Volunteer and as an associate director, and having watched the development of the Peace Corps in one African nation since 1962, I have concluded that the agency might do a better job of administering by cutting down on its administration. The time may now be appropriate, in some countries at least, to let Volunteers become integral elements of the governments they work for, having them flow directly into the host bureaucracy instead of supplementing the host's jurisdiction with another management system.

Host governments have steadily increased their participation in Peace Corps programs over the past six years. They have become more involved in training, selection and placement of Volunteers. This experience with the Peace Corps has produced host country personnel who are knowledgeable in the ways of the agency's administration, Washington as well as overseas, and aware of the diverse personalities of Volunteers. Inevitably, this has led to the host ministries' expecting and asking for more of a say in the operation and control of their employees, the Peace Corps Volunteers.

A shift of administrative responsibilities to the ministries would naturally affect the individual Volunteer most. Instead of being shepherded through a predominantly American-controlled training and assignment process, he would be tossed into the foreign bureaucracy and be asked to function more as an individual than as a member of a corps. This would obscure the "corps" concept, for the Volunteer would not have a common American institution to rally about. This is hardly regrettable, for instead of having a local staff delegating or dictating role definitions, the Volunteer would be in the more satisfactory position of defining the Peace Corps for himself.

Under these circumstances, of course, the Volunteer might be more susceptible to falling into another hardly more desirable role as an expatriate contract worker. However, in countries where a shift in administration would be considered, the brief history of Volunteers has created an image of what "Peace Corps" is too. New Volunteers operate under the implications of this image and certain behavior by them is expected, as it was expected of the first Volunteers who challenged the established role of foreigners in former colonial African countries. The concept of "how Volunteers operate" may be just as difficult to violate as it once was to refuse to join a "sundowner" club

Put hosts in charge

By eliminating the overseas American bureaucracy, Volunteers would lose the continual staff support which in some countries allows Volunteers to live above the normal system of communication of the nation and beyond the limited support and supplies of the host ministries. Peace Corps staff concern with an occasional intervention in job problems fosters among Volunteers an "us-directed" vision of their position in the host country. A Volunteer who says, "I work for the American government" instead of seeing himself employed by a ministry of community development or health has been allowed to reach this attitude by an overindulgent staff too anxious to assist and support.

Removing the American presence of an area representative and hopefully replacing him with a government counterpart who would support local and other nationals as well as Volunteers would go a long way toward making Peace Corps Volunteers part of host institutions. In addition, full responsibility for administration of Volunteers might force many countries to develop machinery to support them, a positive step their systems need to take.

The vital professional assistance supplied by the Peace Corps country director could be supplied by a person assigned to the ministry and available to assist all personnel, not solely Volunteers. Medical support, which has been curtailed greatly by the new Selective Service legislation, could still function, if only in an abridged form. A Peace Corps physician might be assigned abroad or, when possible, hired locally. His position would need to be defined so that he did not become a symbolic "head" of the Volunteers or, at the very least, an authority figure Volunteers could depend upon. Many of the administrative functions, such as allowances, travel and personal emergencies, could be handled by the American Embassy or by a host government-embassy collaboration.

The developing of new programs and involvements for Volunteers, the search for Planning-Programming-Budgeting System (PPBS) solutions and the evaluation of ongoing projects would all rest with the Peace Corps Washington country desk officers under an expanded definition of this role. The desk officer's contact

would be directly with the host government. The history of the Peace Corps in some countries should give Washington the confidence that it is possible to find host government personnel who are appreciative of Peace Corps procedures and are able to fulfill the field's requirements, even in the more complicated realms of composing program descriptions and meeting training deadlines. To smooth such an administrative transfer, it would be possible to assign a Peace Corps Washington person to the host ministry for a time at least.

Shifting to local control would also reduce the costs of maintaining Volunteers abroad. Beyond salaries of staff, motor pool and housing costs, a wide range of "services" which over the years have developed in Peace Corps offices could be abolished.

Early terminations may be more numerous, especially during the tough first weeks of arrival when there would not be a reassuring presence of an overseas staff handling the difficulties of disembarkation. To offset this factor, the Office of Volunteer Support might re-establish the "escort officer," a returned Volunteer or staff member from the country, to assist the host government orientation during the first few weeks in country.

Although such a change in the agency would strain the administrative concepts of the Peace Corps, present new problems of communication with the host government and give Volunteers greater flexibility and freedom that could be abused, it would also give host countries a significant voice in the recruiting, hiring and placement of an important number of its employees. It would also be a positive response to the faith they have held in the Peace Corps. Perhaps if the Peace Corps does not seek such a new understanding, these governments will begin to decline Volunteers in favor of foreign assistance that does not come so tightly packaged. For these reasons, the move to place Volunteers into established agencies of a host country and under their control should be given consideration.

John Coyne recently completed a tour as an associate director in Ethiopia, where he was a Volunteer from 1962 to 1964. Between his Volunteer and staff service, he was a liaison officer in Washington. He is now writing a novel about the Peace Corps.

LETTERS TO THE VOLUNTEER

McLuhan reviewed

To THE VOLUNTEER:

There very well may be a television set in every booklocker some day, and the McLuhan book could easily preempt the PECTO with instant thinking via satellite. But as long as we have such language as "a simultaneous happening, non-national and interdependent" in the hot media, it's pretty hard to do away with altogether, isn't it?

Each generation has its own ways of absorbing its particular hobgoblins —not to mention its bugaboos. And every generation has found a way to take *The New York Times*—or leave it alone!

"The Media Missionaries" (THE VOLUNTEER, October) will provoke a lot of dialogue (and some people). It may even be the last living example of hot, printed, literate material before the cool fires consume every last vestige of the Cuneiform tablet.

I have tried to keep my tongue out of my cheek and hope you did the same, although I seem to detect a slight bulge on the left side of your faces.

As I look forward into the past, I guess I fall into the lukewarm category best described by the paraphrase:

"There's no cool like an old cool!"

Warmest electronic regards,

CHARLIE CALDWELL

Washington, D. C.

The writer was director of public information for the Peace Corps in the "hot" years of 1963, 1964 and 1965.

Still need action

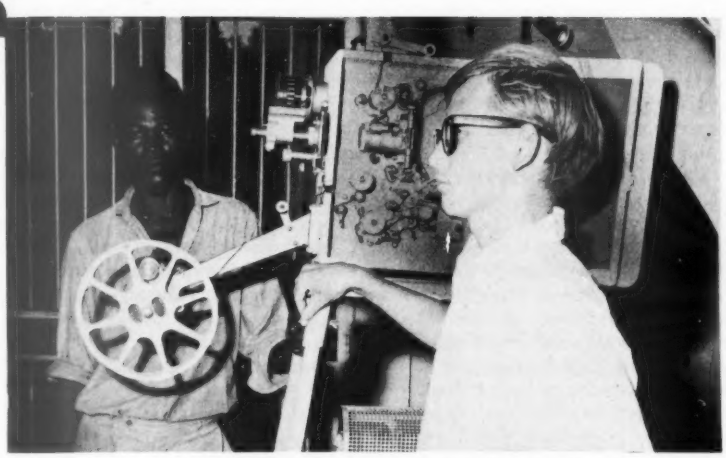
To THE VOLUNTEER:

The observations of socio-linguist, Marshall McLuhan, provide information relevant to the Peace Corps and its plans for the future Volunteer, the agent of communication. However, I would like to add some observations from the cool media environment of the Volunteer, from which I have recently returned, to those of Mr. Awbrey and Mr. Reed in "The Media Missionaries."

McLuhan concludes *The Medium is the Massage* with, "Now with TV and folk singing, thought and action are closer and social involvement is greater." I think TV and other mass media have been bringing thought and awareness closer together but not action, nor have they been providing for fuller social involvement.

In Nigeria, severed from television, telephone and other sophisticated "tele," I found new forms of communication. When I entered towns, I felt them. Music was a public and continuing phenomenon and so was dance. Markets provided multi-sensory avenues of communications replete with human bodies simultaneously in vocal, visual and physical contact. Activities took place outside homes in overlapping human networks entangled in social involvement. At home, I found people hidden within cubicles on empty streets punctuated with telephone booths. IBM cards, telephones, TV sets, abundant printed matter and movies all served to reduce person-to-person communication. In one striking moment, I noted the similarities between the way the news of Vietnam and past good serial war movies were presented. In another, I witnessed English classes at Michigan State University taught by television and tests graded by machines so that students never had a chance to associate flesh with their student number.

The electronic media expand our awareness but I wonder if they deepen our social involvement. Action isn't needed to establish communication at home. The electronic media act, while people observe and listen to the global village. Audio and video are aspects of action but they are "linearized" in the "hot media" environment, removed from the three-dimensional space of other forms of action.



A writer notes: "Some countries are turning cool and the Peace Corps is turning cold." Above, "cool" Volunteer John Dermody uses a "hot" medium (movies) in his teaching work in Niger.

The "cool media" experience of the Peace Corps Volunteer demands action in order to establish communication. There are no mass media, so a Volunteer must act and initiate activity in order to find it. He must enter *into* situations, since avenues as a spectator, listener or observer are limited. His full social involvement doesn't cover a global village, but it does elicit his thought and his action.

Perhaps McLuhan's book would more appropriately have concluded with an extrapolation of his quote from Socrates' *Phaedrus:* "The discovery of the alphabet will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls because they will not use their memories; they will trust the external written character and not remember of themselves." That extrapolation might read, "The invention of the electronic media will obstruct action in the lives of men because they will seek awareness and not remember the sense of involvement."

Hopefully, the application of the experiences of Volunteers in "cool media" environment to that of the electronic media may create a fuller "social involvement."

FRED ENGLANDER
Former Volunteer

Lansing, Mich.

A 'hot' situation

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

I have just read Messrs. Awbrey and Reed's article on Marshall McLuhan's concept of media of communication. Although I found it quite interesting (a "cool" thing to say), I feel that generalizations in their article hold true for some but not all Peace Corps situations.

Although the authors referred to only the "cool" side of McLuhan's hot-cool cultural theory as relevant to the Peace Corps, McLuhan's total concept must be kept in view. His explanation that some presently "cool" cultures have an advantage over presently "hot" cultures since everyone is progressing, or reverting as the case may be, to the "cool" position again is certainly valid. However, even though some countries are turning cool and the Peace Corps is turning cold, what about those places that are, and will remain for many years to come, a structured, a literate, i.e., a "hot" environment? The authors discussed working in "cool" cultures but didn't mention the work being done in countries where the people are literate movie-goers, but without access to televisions or phones. Since this situation fits McLuhan's definition of a "hot" culture, shouldn't the authors have referred to McLuhan's suggestion that it makes a great difference whether a hot or cool medium is used in a hot or cool culture?

If assigned to this "hot" work situation, does a "cool" training program prepare a Volunteer for his tasks? How does the Volunteer take his supercooling experience and warm it up for his new environment? Perhaps superheating would be a more logical preparation for his forthcoming endeavors.

I'm a "cool" generationer and Volunteer but my situation is "hot" enough to melt an ice cube—or a television tube.

JOHN W. TUCKER

Trichur, Kerala
India

Too many visitors

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

The article on the Volunteer council by Jerald Posman (November) certainly brought back to mind some of the problems of my time in Pakistan. How I would have welcomed a council—provided I wasn't *the* member (not much danger). Of course I don't see how a council rep could be anything else. In my area there were 12 Volunteers working in nine different categories, and it would certainly take a rare person to represent that group effectively—especially if the rest of the group were as limited in communication as I.

I would have welcomed a council setup if the council rep could cope with the multiple fields and their resultant modes of thinking and expression. I, too, would have been delighted to have had a special "meeter greeter," one who could and would entertain the visitors—so long as they kept them out of my thinning hair. It seems like a quarter of my time was spent hosting visitors. (I didn't do much in the line of entertainment.) How can you pass on a sense of dependability and punctuality when you are continuously interrupted or delayed due to the necessity of hosting some joker out sightseeing?

ROBERT LINDLEY
Pakistan IV

Honolulu, Hawaii

Lots of languages

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

I would like to comment on the article "What PCVs think of their service" (November VOLUNTEER), in reference to the statement that "Teachers, particularly in Africa, are less likely than other Volunteers to be fluent in the language or to consider language very important either on or off the job."

While I am only speaking for myself, I feel there are a few points which should be considered here. I had two years of French in high school (with mediocre grades) and

two years in college (with worse than mediocre grades). Yet, like all of the ten people in my country group, I managed to get at least an S-3 in French before arriving in Togo and many did better than I. I also had one month's training in African language, two weeks of Ewe, and, after a rather illogical shift, two weeks of Mina. As it turned out, this training was of little importance. Togo has 41 languages. The people in Dapango speak Moba. Of the rest of our group of ten, one is in a Bassari-speaking region, one in an Ewe-speaking region, one in a Losso-speaking area, two in a Mina-speaking area, three in a Cabrais-speaking area and the others in a region where God only knows what they speak—maybe Fon or Tchokossi or Gourma or Konkomba or Kotokoli.

I might point out, too, that in this area Moba is only the *major* language; Mossi, Ashanti, Mina and Gourma, as well as Hausa, are "useful."

I find that the educated people (those beyond the first grade) speak French. Students are forbidden to use African languages on the school compound. Therefore I am picking up Moba slowly. I don't expect a lot more. I may not stay here for two years; I may be transferred or transfer to another town. And there, too, there would be about five dialects of Moba spoken within a community of 20,000 or so.

Do you really expect more?

PAUL INSKEEP

Dapango, Togo

Quality sought

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

Often the services of the Peace Corps are centered in problem areas of a minor nature while the real needs of the country go unattended. We believe the Peace Corps is capable of working in the areas of severe need, but we must be realistic about our contributions. The Peace Corps cannot send people ill prepared to do a job in an area of personal need to the host country. It is an insult to say we can help, receive a request for help, and then send a person no better prepared than any educated person of the host country itself. It's a massive waste of money, Volunteers and the country's faith in the Peace Corps and America to do so.

We propose that a full 60 to 75 per cent of all those sent to Latin American and Asian countries should be involved in areas other than education. If the countries need help in agriculture, then the Peace Corps, to be really effective, should concentrate on helping to fulfill the need. These people should not be just anyone, but those who show a definite ability in the particular field needed. It does no real good to send a general college grad to work as a community development Volunteer unless this person knows what he is doing. Most CD people have a great deal of difficulty in accomplishing their jobs due to a lack of actual knowledge in that field. This should not happen, any more than a liberal arts graduate should be assigned as an English language teacher just because his native language is English.

The other 25 per cent of the Volunteers, usually in education, should also be people with experience in their field. We don't believe that enough effort is expended to interest married persons who, for example, have been teaching for a period of time but haven't started families yet. Here husband and wife would be especially desirable. We would hope for a greater increase in the number of those able to teach teachers in college and universities.

But how do we attract these people, both in blue and white-collar fields? In addition to the natural lure of the Peace Corps and its "service" tradition, we think experienced people can be attracted by paying tribute to their skills and increasing their readjustment allowances. The Peace Corps cannot afford to get involved in a salary hassle, but $100 to $500 more on a graduated scale would be useful to these people who give up so much before they even join the Peace Corps. For teachers, a scale according to years of teaching could be used: say, $100 extra for one to three years of experience, $200 for four to five years of experience and so on to a maximum of $500 or whatever amount would be judged needed. It's entirely possible to considerably boost the pay scale of an experienced Volunteer to, say, a $5,000 readjustment allowance, by cutting down on the number of Volunteers sent to the host country. If the Peace Corps is interested in simple mathematics, it is easy to see that 200 experienced personnel at $5,000 apiece is no more than 700 inexperienced ones at $1,500 apiece. Although we don't want to see all of the liberal arts graduates excluded solely because they have no experience, we do advocate some sort of allowance to those who have proven ability, if only to initially attract those people with greater know-how. We do not argue for a change in the in-country allowance, only in the readjustment allowance.

If this scale existed, it would also encourage the recent college grad to work a year or two before joining the Peace Corps, which would greatly increase his possible productivity. Surely such a scale could be formed for those with work experience in the other desired fields such as agriculture and nursing.

A real case could be built for attracting recent retirees from business or teaching. These people with decreased family obligations, vast experience and free time would be a benefit to any program.

In essence, we believe Volunteers need pre-Volunteer experiences. And a better job must be done in interesting experienced people in joining the Peace Corps by stressing the need for their talents, the chance to make a worthwhile contribution and a slightly higher readjustment allowance as recognition of their abilities.

This may decrease the number of younger people who volunteer for the Peace Corps, but we don't want to become a machine grinding out Volunteers in 100-lot numbers. It's the quality of the Volunteer and his ability to serve rather than the raw numbers pumped into a country that counts. We cannot measure success by the amount of people we supply a country but by their ability to contribute.

GARY R. CURTIS
THOMAS J. EURICH

Romblon, the Philippines

Higher standards

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

We would like to comment on the growing numbers of unqualified Peace Corps Volunteers. In the past 18 months we have served as Peace Corps Volunteers in two West African countries. In both countries Volunteers have commented on the fact that as numbers increased, Volunteers seemed less wanted, needed or appreciated by the host country nationals. In these countries we saw non-science and non-education majors trying to teach science in a teacher training

college, science majors forced to teach manual arts to people who knew crafts better than they, livestock workers told to set up small businesses, and secondary education or non-education majors told to teach as "experts" in elementary schools. As the host nationals learn of these irregularities they assume most Peace Corps Volunteers are not qualified for their jobs and couldn't do the same kind of work in the States. This then causes them to feel we're degrading them and classifying them as lower than our own people or as people to whom unqualified personnel can be sent. True, many of their local people in similar positions are not as qualified as the Peace Corps Volunteer, but they aren't sent from another country. Thus we would like to encourage that higher education standards be set in training as the Peace Corps is endeavoring to increase the number of Peace Corps Volunteers overseas.

EUNICE HOKANSON
IRENE NOWAK

Monrovia, Liberia

Draft solution

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

I have yet to see a letter on the draft in THE VOLUNTEER that comes to grips with the two most significant issues.

I am sickened by universal service arguments that ask "can't one serve his country in more than one way?" That is simply to equate destruction with construction and smacks of privilege. The Peace Corps ought to accept the fact that ideally it represents the diametrical opposite of the military segment of American society, and, congressional appropriations and draft deferments aside, it is in fundamental conflict with that segment (or *ought* to be).

Secondly, the draft, by its very nature as an obligation, cannot be democratic. Compulsion and liberty don't mix. It is thus quite impossible, regardless of the gimmick or system, to democratize a fundamentally undemocratic institution. To reform the draft, abolish it.

ANDREW BERMAN

Lama-Kara, Togo

Opposes CD emphasis

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

I am tired of the Peace Corps' emphasis on community development.

Memorandum

TO : The field
FROM : The editors
SUBJECT: Watering holes

DATE: February, 1968

Where the RPCVs went (and want to go): Peggy Conroy of Peace Corps Talent Search reports that 41 per cent of all overseas staff members are former Volunteers, including nine country directors. Also, the number of former Volunteers who have applied for jobs with the Peace Corps has passed the 5,000 mark.

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Joker in the house: the Peace Corps announcement of the appointment of Barton Pakull as deputy chief psychiatrist in the Office of Medical Programs contained this biographical warning: "His hobbies include parachute jumping, tennis and practical jokes."

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It's About Time Department: the headline of the month came from *Bowling Green* (Ohio) *News*. It read: "Peace Corps to Assist Volunteers."

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For those who are tired of using "CD" in their Peace Corps rhetoric, there's a potential replacement called "C.I." That's Community Involvement . . . And in the acronym division, Carolyn Payton reminds us that her use of the term BAGS (B.A. Generalists) was not pejorative. In fact, says the Eastern Caribbean Islands director, generalists are not "sad sacks" and they are the backbone of the Peace Corps.

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Contrary to one report, the man in the photograph is not pounding fufu with a too-skinny stick. Instead, he is a happy water prospector and well digger in Chad named Bob MacAlister who also happens to be Peace Corps country director in that African country. He is shown working a *chauduff* in the Lake Chad area.

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Music man: To promote cleanliness and good health in Malawi, Volunteer Jack Allison turned to songwriting. Two of his compositions, "The Fertilizer Song" and "Brush Away the Flies From Your Children's Eyes," became popular successes—"The Fertilizer Song" was recently played a dozen times a day on a local radio station. Allison is now working on an album.

Effective community development requires experts in CD, and the Peace Corps simply doesn't have these experts. What we have are a lot of "A.B. generalists," many of whom, believe it or not, actually have special skills. But, because of the Peace Corps' veneration of CD, these skills are being wasted.

A little over a year ago I accepted an assignment to a "health-community development" training program—knowing nothing about either subject and knowing practically nothing about the Peace Corps. But I wanted to help people in need enough to take what I was offered. I soon found during training that in order to be allowed to help I would have to play the old CD game and make like a gung ho community developer. Well I made it, I fooled them all and "graduated," and here I am in Brazil; and after a year of fooling around I am finally doing what I want to do and what I am qualified to do. I am teaching art and design to junior high pupils and, if I can get the equipment, I'll teach the printing trade in my second year here.

I happen to believe in teaching, rather than community developing, as the hope of underdeveloped countries like Brazil. Brazil *needs* teachers. My city (a satellite of Brasília) has about 50,000 people. Statistically, some 30,000 of these should be of school age. But there are only 8,500 children in school here. It is obvious that teachers are needed. It is also obvious that school buildings are needed, but when I asked the Peace Corps recently for a building in which to teach industrial arts and graphic arts I again ran into the old brick wall of community development. I was told that the School-to-School program would give a thousand dollars to build a building, but only if the community donated the labor. My school is operated free for poor children by the Masons of Brasília. The Masons are ready and willing to build this building with aid from the U.S. They don't have enough money to build it on their own. And now they are told that instead of hiring a competent contractor (with U.S. aid) they must recruit amateurs from the neighborhood—an absurd task. All because the Peace Corps thinks more of community development than helping children learn. If you told a group of parents in the United States that they'd get their new school provided they built it themselves, they'd think you were nuts.

Also, community development requires that competent people be placed in jobs they are qualified to do as a screen for their community development activities. This is, among other things, a basically dishonest concept. This implies that the job they are qualified to do should be just a sideline. Peace Corps Washington clings to CD as a cure-all—not only for the problems of underdeveloped countries, but for all problems of Volunteers as well. It is often said, "Well, he didn't do much, but you know it is so hard to do community development." CD has become an excuse for do-nothing Volunteers.

Why doesn't the Peace Corps try to supply skilled people—or at least take their A.B. generalists, many of whom could be good teachers here—and place them where they could do the most good? I know it is hard for the Peace Corps to try to lure successful teachers, mechanics and farmers from their high-paying jobs in the States. But the Peace Corps should at least try harder to use the skills its Volunteers *do* have, and this will be easier when the Peace Corps chucks its overriding esteem for community development.

RICHARD Y. NORRISH

Brasília, Brazil

Exit from Gabon

The Peace Corps has withdrawn its program in Gabon at the request of the host government. The eviction from the West African nation involved 57 Volunteers, most of whom had been engaged in rural school construction and secondary and vocational teaching.

The note from the Gabon government did not specify any reason for terminating the program but expressed "sincere thanks" for "work accomplished in Gabon by the Peace Corps." The order was issued in late December and members of the program left the country before the end of the year. A first hint of a change in policy appeared last September when the Gabon government suspended a previously requested program for fisheries, nutrition and rural health programs.

The Gabon Volunteers went to Freetown, Sierra Leone, for a completion of service conference. About half of them would have completed service in June and many of these returned home; others remained in Freetown pending reassignment to other programs.

It was the first termination of a Peace Corps program since Volunteers were ordered out of Mauritania during the Arab-Israeli conflict in mid-1967.

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